

Michael F. Easley
Governor



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

For Release: **IMMEDIATE**
Date: April 15, 2003

Contact: Reid Hartzoge
Phone: (919) 733-5612

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION ENDORSE EASLEY'S PROPOSED FREEZE ON TAXES

RALEIGH—The State Board of Education's Executive Committee approved a resolution endorsing proposals to continue the state's sales and income taxes for two years rather than eliminate them.

Members approved the resolution for a number of reasons, but primarily as a way to avoid further cuts to the state's public education system. Without the state's sales and income taxes, cuts are projected to total \$267 million to the university, community colleges and public education systems of the state, with \$165 million of those reductions imposed on the state's public schools.

"I am pleased to have the support of our State Board of Education, our school and teacher organizations, in addition to that the North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry (NCCBI)," said Gov. Mike Easley. "It is critical that we maintain our investments in education to ensure that our students graduate prepared to compete in a global economy. We are one of a handful of states that are making real progress in education. Even in tough economic times, we have increased our investments in our public schools, while other agencies have had their budgets cut by as much as 15 percent."

"North Carolina has one of the country's fastest growing populations and our public schools are feeling the impact," said State Board of Education Chairman Phil Kirk. "Eliminating the sales tax will result in our schools not receiving the necessary resources to meet the ever-increasing needs of students and educators."

"Support of this resolution is consistent with our vision that North Carolina's public schools are key to the state's economic recovery," said state Superintendent Mike Ward. "We need more funds, not less, if our students are to continue their academic progress."

All Board members were consulted prior to the adoption of the resolution by the Executive Committee members and will formally adopt the resolution at their May meeting, which is scheduled for April 30 - May 1 at the Education Building, Raleigh.

In addition to the State Board of Education's endorsement, The North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE), North Carolina Citizens for Business and Industry (NCCBI), and the state's chamber of commerce have announced support for the Governor's budget proposals.

###